

Appl. No.: 10/646,085
Reply to Office Action of: March 25, 2004

Remarks

Claims 1-15 are pending in this application. Claims 1-7 are allowed. Claims 8, 9 and 12-15 stand rejected and claims 10 and 11 are objected to. The following remarks are addressed to the referenced paragraphs of the Office Action dated March 25, 2004.

Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b)

Claims 8, 9 and 12-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Pan (U.S. Patent No. 6,254,417). Claim 8 is amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 10. As acknowledged in the Office Action, claim 10 contains allowable subject matter. Applicants respectfully contend that the cited references do not disclose or suggest a connector having a latching arm pivotally connected to the walls defining two adjacent passageways by a connecting web. Accordingly, Applicants contend that claim 8, as amended, is in condition for allowance.

Claims 9 and 11-14 depend from claim 8 and Applicants respectfully contend that they are allowable for the reason that claim 8 is allowable, as provided above.

Applicants respectfully contend that claim 11 includes another feature that is neither disclosed nor suggested by the cited references, as acknowledged in the Office Action. Applicants respectfully contend that the cited references do not disclose or suggest that "the connecting web is disposed at substantially the central portion of the walls defining the two adjacent contact passageways along the mating axis."

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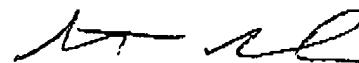
Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the allowance of claims 1-7. Applicants further appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 10 and 11. As described above, the allowable subject matter has been incorporated into claim 8.

Conclusion

For all of the foregoing reasons and in view of the foregoing amendments, Applicants respectfully contend that the application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request entry of the foregoing amendments, allowance of claims 1-9 and 11-14, and issuance of Letters Patent for the subject invention. Please charge any additional requisite fees relating to this amendment and response to Deposit Account No. 50-1581.

Respectfully submitted,



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